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TAGS: [CU](#) [EU](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#)
SUBJECT: PORTUGUESE AMBASSADOR ON EU-TROIKA METING WITH GOC
REF: LISBON 2500

Classified By: DCM James Williams for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Portuguese Ambassador to Cuba Mario Godinho de Matos provided COM with a readout of the September 24 meeting between a GOC team headed by FM Perez Roque and representatives of the EU troika. In general, Godinho de Matos, readout tracked with that obtained by Embassy Lisbon (reftel) with a couple of substantive distinctions. Godinho de Matos noted that the Cubans had lobbied hard to prevent EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana from attending the meeting. Solana did not, in fact, attend, though apparently for reasons unconnected to the Cuban effort. Nevertheless, Godinho de Matos said the Portuguese were struck by the effort to keep Solana out.

¶2. (C) Godinho de Matos, description of FM Amado,s statements to Perez Roque goes somewhat further than that recounted in reftel. He said Amado insisted that Cuba must make some kind of &gesture8 to overcome EU reservations about a better relationship with Cuba, and suggested a release of political prisoners might be such a gesture. Perez Roque said such a gesture must be reciprocated with respect to human rights issues affecting Europe (e.g., the CIA flights and prisons noted in reftel). Godinho de Matos said Perez Roque said Cuba only wants to be treated by Europe the same way it treats China and Viet Nam. According to Godinho de Matos, Perez Roque also said Cuba seeks to strengthen its relations with the EU in the perspective of its own &normalization8 and its relations with the U.S. He apparently did not define &normalization8 further.

¶3. (C) Godinho de Matos, description, and that reported in reftel, contrast to reports we got in conversations with our colleagues from the Spanish and French embassies in Havana, both of whom described the get-together as very successful. The Spanish have argued for some time that merely sitting down with the Cubans is solid progress, so their position is not surprising. The French normally take a more realist stance, so their views were somewhat surprising. Other European, and some Latin American, contacts say they think nothing substantive came from the Troika meeting, and that nothing substantive is likely to come out of the human rights meetings between Spain and Cuba scheduled for November. Godihono de Matos indicated the EU will keep the channels opne for discussion with the Cubans, but there are no plans for a follow-up meeting yet

¶4. (C) On a separate note, COM also spoke briefly with the Angolan ambassador who commented on President Dos Santos' visit to Cuba and meeting with Fidel Castro (the two were shown standing and shaking hands in prominent press photos

following Castro,s September 21 interview on Cuban TV). Differing by 180 degrees from other analysts of the September 21 interview of Castro, the Angolan described the comandante as mentally very lucid, but physically very weak. He also noted that Dos Santos had complained to Raul Castro about the high cost of Cuban doctors working in Angola (\$5000.00 per doctor) and Raul replied &I don,t do doctors, that is (Fidel,s) issue.8

15. (C) Comment: While many of our European colleagues are hesitant to get tough with the Cubans (except for the former East Bloc countries), most are realistic enough to be skeptical of the more proactive Spanish approach. As one European diplomat put it, "The Cubans need us, not the other way around. Why should we even consider meeting Cuban terms for discussion?" With both parties in standoff mode, there is not likely to be any further interaction between the GOC and the EU in Havana during the remainder of the Portuguese presidency. France will stand in for Slovenia, which does not have an embassy here, and then begin its own term, making it the lead EU interlocutor in Havana during the next full year.

WILLIAMS